

Environment

Major Initiatives and Accomplishments

July 2003

Major themes:

- The air is cleaner.
- The water is more pure.
- Lands are better protected.
- We are nationally recognized for collaborative management.

1. The air is cleaner.

- Utah currently meets all federal air quality standards. This was not the case at the beginning of the Leavitt administration. The air is cleaner because of a combination of improvements:
 - Enhanced vehicle emissions testing.
 - Reduced road congestion.
 - Aggressive expansion of public transportation.
 - Enhanced civic engagement through Envision Utah, the largest voluntary quality growth partnership in the nation.
- Visibility in the west has improved because of the pioneering work of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission, and Western Regional Air Partnership. These collaborations have changed the way we solve environmental problems in the west, providing a model for environmental progress that has been adopted in federal regulations.
 - Gov. Leavitt served as vice-chair of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission and serves as co-chair of the Western Regional Air Partnership.
 - The Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission made over 70 recommendations improving visibility in 16 national parks and wilderness areas on the Colorado Plateau.
 - The Western Regional Air Partnership includes three federal agencies, 13 states and 13 tribal nations. The partnership established a regulatory commitment to reduce sulfur dioxide levels by 50-70% by 2040, and a strategy to accomplish that goal.

2. The water is more pure.

- Utah has among the nation's cleanest watersheds and it has improved dramatically during the Leavitt administration.
- Seventy-three (73%) percent of Utah's streams currently meet federal water quality standards, compared to 59% ten years ago, a 24% improvement since Gov. Leavitt took office. Currently, 60% of the nation's streams meet this standard.
- As part of the commitment to improve Utah's water quality, nearly 5,000 underground gas storage tanks have been upgraded and cleaned-up, 353 million gallons of contaminated ground water at Superfund, brownfield and voluntary clean-up sites are being restored, and discharges have been reduced from farming and ranging operations.
- Utah's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations – which reduce the impact of farming and ranching on water quality – have been adopted by EPA as a national model.

3. Lands are better protected.

- Utah's most environmentally-sensitive land is better protected because of historic land exchanges and land conservation.

Land Exchanges – Gov. Leavitt helped protect 500,000 acres of land in national parks, monuments, recreation areas and wilderness study areas through value-for-value land exchanges with the federal government:

- The Grand Staircase-National Parks Land Exchange (400,000 acres) was the largest land exchange in the continental United States since the Louisiana Purchase.
- The West Desert Land Exchange (100,000 acres) protected wilderness in Utah's west desert.

Both exchanges were negotiated with the Clinton Administration and removed thousands of parcels of state school trust lands from within the boundaries of sensitive natural areas.

Open Space Preservation – Utah's Quality Growth Commission, which Gov. Leavitt helped establish, has conserved approximately 35,000 acres of critical land in perpetuity, protecting critical wildlife, watershed, historical and agricultural assets in the state.

4. We are nationally recognized for collaborative environmental management.

- **The 2002 Olympic Winter Games** were the most environmentally-sensitive games ever.
 - State agencies collaborated with the organizing committee to achieve net zero air emissions, 85% recovery rate for waste because of recycling and composting, compliance with all safety and environmental regulations and the planting of 100,000 trees in Utah.
- **Envision Utah.** Gov. Leavitt helped found Envision Utah, the nation's largest voluntary smart growth partnership formed to create a vision and implement strategies to protect Utah's environment, economic strength and quality of life for future generations.
 - The partnership includes 130 diverse and bipartisan leaders from a region encompassing 100 square miles and 116 counties and cities. Tens of thousands of Utah residents participated in the development of a Quality Growth Strategy to preserve critical lands, enhance air quality, conserve water, increase mobility and transportation choices and other smart growth goals.
- **Enlibra Doctrine.** Gov. Leavitt co-authored the principles of *Enlibra* with former Gov. John Kitzhaber, (D) Oregon. *Enlibra* is an environmental philosophy designed to accelerate environmental progress. The word is derived from Latin roots and means "to move toward balance." It includes eight principles that promote balanced environmental stewardship. The philosophy has been adopted by the National Governors Association and Western Governors' Association, and is currently being used in federal, state, local, and private entities.